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UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 002222

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR INL/LP, WHA/CEN, AND WHA/PPC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [KJUS](#) [PHUM](#) [ECON](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAN POLICE DELIVER BLOW TO SUSPECTED
NARCOTRAFFICKERS; SEIZE LOTS OF CASH

1. (U) On October 2, Honduran police confiscated USD 1,070,000 from suspected Honduran narcotraffickers near the city of San Pedro Sula (SPS) after discovering the cash during the search of a suspect truck at a police inspection stop. The money was found concealed in spare tires inside a sealed compartment. Police seized 107 packets containing USD 10,000 each; all bills were USD 20 denomination. There are reports of a few counterfeit bills among the cash.

2. (SBU) According to Honduran press reports, prior to stopping at the police barrier, occupants of the truck, and a SUV possibly providing security for the truck, had apparently been in a fire-fight with members of another vehicle, resulting in a female occupant of the SUV being injured. When questioned by police, the vehicles' occupants claimed they were the victims of an ambush. Police, however, initially made no arrests. (Note: DEA reports that the vehicle's occupants left the scene in the SUV en route to a hospital in SPS prior to the search of the truck, thus accounting for no arrests being made. End Note.) Gladis Suyapa Castillo Hernandez, the wounded female in the SUV, is currently in a private clinic in SPS recovering from gunshot sounds. The driver of the SUV, Juan Carlos Hernandez, has disappeared. Both suspects are Honduran nationals. The driver of the truck remains unknown.

3. (U) Organized Crime Special Prosecutor Doris Aguilar, convinced the money was intended to pay for a large drug shipment, intends to more fully investigate the case. In the interim, Honduran authorities have charged Gladis Castillo with money laundering and police are reportedly waiting to interrogate her. No visitors are being allowed into her hospital room. Police, who have also issued an arrest warrant for the SUV's driver, Hernandez, believe that many other individuals may be involved.

Pierce